

POLITICAL RECONCILIATION IN IRAQ

Mr. NELSON of Florida. A couple days ago, we had General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker in front of our Senate Armed Services Committee in the morning, and then I had a chance to visit with them again in the afternoon in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. These are two very dedicated and bright public servants, and their public service is certainly appreciated, and we expressed that—I think every Senator who questioned them.

The bottom line for this Senator from the State of Florida is that if we go back and look at what was the initial reason stated for the surge, which was over a year ago, it was stated that it was to bring some stability and give some time in order that the Sunnis and the Shiites could have more reconciliation so they could start charting a more stable government for themselves. When pressed on whether that political reconciliation had occurred, both General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker said they thought it had. And then when I asked, well, what laws have been passed, they named two or three, as if that were the example of political reconciliation, and I think it would be one indicia.

I further asked had those laws been implemented. Of course, with each of the questions that narrowed the focus, the answer was less and less painting a picture that political reconciliation had occurred. We would certainly hope that political reconciliation would occur, because it would clearly be in the interest of the United States that Iraq could be stabilized.

It is the opinion of this Senator that the political reconciliation has not occurred—while at the same time the aggressive diplomatic effort in reaching out to other countries in the region that are very important to bringing about political reconciliation in Iraq has not occurred. Therefore, the tremendous success and effectiveness of the surge, militarily, in fact has not borne the fruit of political reconciliation as we had hoped it would. That is a disappointment to this Senator.

On the subject of Iraq, I need to bring to the attention of the Senate that yesterday I had the privilege of chairing a subcommittee in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on the question of whether the rapes of American women who are contractor personnel in Iraq as a result of the war effort there—whether these rapes are being prosecuted. The answer to that is, sadly, no. We had dramatic testimony by a Mrs. Mary Beth Kineston, who is a rape victim, and Mrs. Dawn Leamon, who for the first time revealed her identity yesterday in the hearing. In the couple of times she spoke on the radio before, she was using a pseudonym. Of course, that testimony was exceptionally emotional, and it was very graphic as to the trauma that these two women had suffered, not only in the act of the sexual assault—and in

the case of one of the women, a gang rape after she had been drugged by fellow Americans—but the trauma in the aftermath of the contractor trying to sweep it under the rug so that it didn't disturb the waters; and all of the trauma each of them went through and the way they were treated by their fellow American workers and fellow contractors in the aftermath of them not being able to get any help. In each case it was not until the military intervened that they actually got any help. In the case of Mrs. Leamon, it was 5 weeks after the fact when she was finally able to see a U.S. military doctor at another base from the forward operating base where the assault took place, and she in fact was told by the doctor that you need to continue to try to work through this and get help; you were drugged and you were raped.

The second panel in our hearing was the Department of Justice, the Department of State, and the Department of Defense. To say the response on why there had not been a prosecution of 26 identified assaults among contractor personnel—not U.S. military—contractors, American women personnel and there had not been one conviction was, indeed, not only deeply disturbing but deeply disappointing.

The way I tried to conduct that hearing, since I chaired the hearing, was to say to those representatives of the Departments of State, Defense, and Justice that we were going to conduct that hearing in a respectful way, and at the end of the day what we wanted was to graphically bring to light the problem that is occurring, not only with the assaults but the aftermath where American women cannot get justice, and that it is the responsibility of their ultimate guarantors, the very departments that are contracting out for the war effort, to see that justice is done. Hopefully, that may have occurred yesterday, to remind all those folks that in a very difficult environment, a war zone, we still have to obey the rule of law and, particularly, when it comes to the rights of Americans, and particularly American women, to be protected and to have the full extent of the law to support their rights.

I bring this to the attention of the Senate because this is not the last time we are going to hear about this issue and, hopefully, the next stories we will hear in the aftermath of this drama that played out in front of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee yesterday will be more a story of success, of how the wheels of the Department of Justice will continue to turn to, as the Good Book says, love mercy and to do justice.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Washington.

GREEN ENERGY TAX CREDITS

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I rise this morning to talk about the Ensign-Cantwell amendment we are going to be voting on shortly.

I thank the many cosponsors of the amendment, which I believe are somewhere in the 20 range, too many to read. With the actual Cantwell-Ensign bill that was introduced last Thursday, I think we have over 40 cosponsors. It is safe to say there has been much enthusiasm about this idea of moving forward on extending expiring green energy tax credits and doing so in a way that we can get the requisite votes we need for the measure to become law and be signed by the President.

I also want to thank Senators BAUCUS and GRASSLEY for their continued focus on green energy tax credits, they understand that we need to move forward on leveling the playing field between the fossil fuel industry and making investments in green energy technology. I know the Finance Committee has had many conversations about this issue, and I am sure they will continue to make it a top priority.

I particularly want to thank my colleague Senator ENSIGN of Nevada, with whom I have had an opportunity to work on several issues in the past such as protecting electricity consumers, ratepayers, from the Enron debacle, to now working with him on these green energy tax credits. I applaud him for standing up and taking the lead and understanding how renewable energy will play a key role in our Nation's economy moving forward, certainly the Nevada economy, and the need to provide a level playing field to keep this year's investment cycle going. Senator ENSIGN understands that, and I appreciate his leadership in getting the other side of the aisle to participate in the sponsorship of this amendment.

I also want to thank Senator REID who, being from Nevada, understands how important the solar energy and the green energy tax credits are for his State's economy, but he also understands the national economy depends on us moving off of fossil fuels. I appreciate his steadfast support in getting this legislation passed. We are fortunate to have Senator REID on our side in the upcoming negotiations with the House, we need to make sure this legislation is actually passed by the House and signed into law.

We are at this point because we believe the investments in green energy tax credits, production tax credits for wind and other renewables, investment tax credits for solar, fuel cells, and for other promising energy sources, and the efficiency tax credits that are in this legislation are stimulative. They are stimulative. We voted in this body to put them as part of a stimulus package, and the Senate Finance Committee said we think in addition to checks going to households, some activity that would keep investment and create jobs in 2008 should be a priority.

Mr. President, this is a stimulative measure that would keep about 100,000 jobs and keep and protect about \$20 billion of investments this year. That is why it is part of this underlying bill, and we hope the House will look at this